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Montréal Communiqué

PEOPLE MANAGERS GIVEN
SOME VITAL FACTS OF LIFE

Approximately 300 words.

For release Monday,
December 8, 1969, after
1:30 p.m.

Some of the lethal hazards of sedentary living were outlined Monday in blunt terms by Alex Wright, a national expert on fitness who is currently physical education director of the Montreal Downtown YMCA.

Mr. Wright noted, for example, that "lack of exercise has been identified as one of the major causes of the upsurge in the number of men being felled during their most productive years by the wide range of cardiovascular diseases lumped under the heading of 'heart attack'."

It sometimes seems as if there is a gadget-and-pill conspiracy to discourage physical activity, he deplored during a luncheon address to the Montreal Personnel Association.

This lack of activity, aggravated by tension and tendencies to overeat, has allowed the level of physical fitness on this continent to sink to a near-crisis level.

Flaccid muscles and expanding waistlines are among the more obvious signs of premature physical deterioration. So are declines in resistance to fatigue, increases in the time required to recover from exertion and, sometimes, even malfunctioning bowels.

"While drugs and pills can mask or relieve some of these symptoms, they are not substitutes for the natural movement so essential to keep the human body in sound operation," he said.

Mr. Wright cautioned, however, that an overenthusiastic rush into a haphazard round of sports or games can also have serious effects.

"Exercise is specific. It is specific to the particular needs of the individual. It is specific to your age, to your work and to what you want it to do," he commented.

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While YMCA programs are tailored to trim down waistlines, tone muscles and improve flexibility, the main emphasis is on cardiovascular endurance.

This, above all, determines how efficiently an individual will be able to work, play and cope with day-to-day stresses or emergencies.

To assess what kind of exercises an individual should do - and for how long, how fast, and how hard - the YMCA has developed a fitness-testing program. This also serves as a basis for charting progress.

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